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RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 7286
RUEHBU/AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES 4543
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 1805
RUEHGT/AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA 0571
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RUEHMD/AMEMBASSY MADRID 3123
RUEHME/AMEMBASSY MEXICO 1775
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LA PAZ 002557

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TAGS: ECON PGOV PREL BL

SUBJECT: GARCIA LINERA URGES CAMPESINOS TO TAKE UP ARMS

Classified By: Charge d'Affairs Krishna Urs for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

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¶1. (SBU) Although Acting President Alvaro Garcia Linera met with all nine prefects (governors) September 19 in an effort to resolve continuing stalemate over the Constituent Assembly's rules of order and to express the GOB's willingness to negotiate, he sent a very different message September 20 in the village of Warizata (in Omasuyos province in the La Paz department). (NOTE: Warizata is known for its radical Aymara leanings and for being the place of origin for the events that led to President Gonzalo de Lozada's fall in October 2003. END NOTE).

¶2. (SBU) Wearing a red poncho, Garcia Linera said that in Omasuyos he learned "to battle, to love and here we've also learned to kill in defense of our country and its natural resources." He then called upon the people of Omasuyos to go to Santa Cruz to "overthrow the Santa Cruz oligarchy." He also made the following additional remarks:

--He said he used to hide his rifle in his poncho when he was a guerrilla with the Tupac Katari Guerrilla Army (EGTK) in the early 1990's. "This red poncho shouldn't be put away yet. This war poncho has to continue to be used. The fight is not over. With happiness and with enthusiasm we must continue this fight."

--"To defend the conquest of the Constituent Assembly, nationalization of hydrocarbons, land distribution, criminal trials of responsibility, requires a permanent state of emergency, a permanent state of mobilization in your communities, your provinces and if necessary in the cities."

--"We can't leave President Morales alone, our president is being attacked on all sides and you are his protection of steel, his shield and you have to be permanently mobilized."

--"The battle has not ended, the fight has not ended; the mobilization has to continue; be ready for an immediate calling like the guerrillas of the indigenous liberation."

--"And now, in 2006, over 50,000 Aymaras and Quechuas can die if necessary to defend our gas. If it's necessary to fight again, we'll do it 10, 20, 50 times."

--He warned "some gas companies" and "some political criminals" that the indigenous "will defend this revolution with their chests, with their hands, with stones, with Mauser rifles."

--"In this victory the indigenous population will not have to back down. Beginning now, since December, 500 years of coming fights and victories are unleashed."

¶13. (C) On the same day, Garcia Linera met privately with campesinos in the Santa Cruz department. Before speaking, Garcia Linera asked all journalists to leave the room. One remained covertly and subsequently reported that Garcia Linera criticized the eastern elites and asked campesinos to take up arms to protect the government. He then asked social sectors to begin mobilizations (e.g. marches, blockades) to pressure Congress to modify the INRA (land reform) law. His speech also included the following:

--"Every action of the president should be accompanied by a mobilization ... In eight months we haven't mobilized and our enemies now think we are weak. Our reforms have to be approved due to pressure."

--He asked social sectors to create alliances with the urban poor in order to control their neighborhoods.

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--Regarding the Constituent Assembly, he said "next week we will look for allies and then we will act as a block, and if Podemos wants to leave, they should."

--He said the campesinos should organize to support the agrarian revolution in early October, at the end of October when the gas companies have to sign new contracts, and again in December and January to support land distribution.

--He declared that the GOB's friendliness with the press has ended, especially in Santa Cruz.

¶14. (C) Comment: Given the MAS' failed "siege" of Santa Cruz September 20 (septel), Garcia Linera's comments indicate increasing GOB frustration. The GOB has implicitly threatened violence in the past as a means to achieve its ends, but the September 20 comments mark the first time that a high-level GOB official has made an outright call to violence. Although Morales recently accused the United States of participating in a plot to destabilize his government, Garcia Linera's remarks are more disturbing. Early September 21, Garcia Linera said "I apologize if people have been offended by what I said yesterday, but I've been misinterpreted." Despite this half-hearted apology, it appears that Garcia Linera, who publicly purports to be the GOB's voice of reason, has not shed his more radical past. End comment.

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